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1825

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE MEDICAL SOCIETY

OF

THE COUNTY OF NEW-YORK,

ON THE

8TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1825.



—
BY JOHN ONDERDONK,
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.
—

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1825.

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OFFICERS

OF THE

Medical Society of the County of New-York,

ELECTED JULY 6, 1825.

DR. JOHN ONDERDONK, *President.*

.. THOMAS COCK, *Vice-President.*

.. SAMUEL L. MITCHILL, *Corresponding Secretary.*

.. NICOLL H. DERING, *Secretary.*

.. JOHN S. CONGER, *Treasurer.*

.. JAMES M. PENDLETON,

.. J. KEARNEY RODGERS,

.. JOHN B. BECK,

.. JOHN C. CHEESMAN,

.. ELBRIDGE G. DUNNELL,

} *Censors.*

Delegate to the State Society.

.. JAMES R. MANLEY.

Lecturers of the Society.

DR. JOHN B. BECK,

.. JOHN BELL,

.. ANDREW HAMERSLEY,

.. J. HANSON,

.. WILLIAM HIBBARD,

.. JOHN I. HOWE,

.. FREDERICK G. KING,

.. D. L. M. PEIXOTTO,

.. JAMES L. PHELPS,

.. J. SMYTH ROGERS,

.. JOHN W. WEED.

NEW-YORK, August 9, 1825.

SIR,

It is with pleasure I communicate to you the following extract from the Minutes of the Medical Society of August 8, 1825.

“ RESOLVED, That the Secretary be requested to solicit of the President, a copy of his Address delivered this day, for publication.”

I am very respectfully,

Yours,

NICOLL H. DERING,

Secretary.

DR. JOHN ONDERDONK,

*President of the Medical Society of the
County of New York.*

NEW-YORK, August 11, 1825.

SIR,

I have received your favour of the 9th instant, communicating the Resolution of the Medical Society, requesting a copy of my Inaugural Address for publication.

Duly sensible of the honour which the gentlemen of the Society have done me, I respectfully comply with their wishes.

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN ONDERDONK.

DR. N. H. DERING.

*24 5th Street N.Y.
to the Medical Society
10th Aug 1825*

P.

J M Smith M.D. &c.
with the respects of
the Author

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,

It is with much diffidence, yet with sentiments of unfeigned gratitude, that I accept the honourable office to which you have elected me. With diffidence, because I have not been accustomed to preside over public bodies—because I find on the list of your former Presidents those who have been among the most eminent and most distinguished of our profession ; and because I see in our present circle, not a few who are making honourable advances towards the same distinction.

With gratitude, for your placing me in so high a seat of professional dignity in the first city in our land, with a great distrust of my ability to serve you in this exalted station, I feel, however, an entire confidence in your indulgent co-operation in promoting the usefulness of our Society.

On an occasion like the present, it might perhaps be expected that I should offer you some remarks professionally useful, or at least professionally entertaining; but, with me the ardour of youthful inquiry is past; and I have so long directed my medical studies and reflections into the one channel of practical utility, rather than into that of argument or disquisition, that I refrain from such topics. Allow me then to advert briefly to a different subject; one which should never be forgotten by us, and the *importance* of which strikes me

with a deeper impression as I advance in years. I mean the *religious character* of our profession.

The relief of misery and the remedy of pain, are the great practical objects of mercy; and a mercy no less than divine was engaged in this exalted function, for the eternal benefit of mankind. The same divine mercy condescended to minister to the temporal calamities of our nature, to those calamities which it is our business to assuage or remove. Hence we find the Saviour occupied in healing the sick; and were his miracles counted, more of this kind would probably be found than of all others. In this fact we perceive the highest honour of our profession; and without detracting from the encomiums due to another profession which we hold in reverence, we may say of ourselves, that we are "fellow workers

with God." We imitate the divine example in soothing misery, and removing pain; and we administer the "medicine" which God himself "giveth to heal their sickness."

If such is the honourable office we sustain under the supreme government of Providence, it seems but proper and consistent, that we should feel the tie by which, not only personally, but professionally, we are *bound* to the Great Physician. The view of a skeleton, with all its admirable mechanism, converted an ancient member of our fraternity from atheism. In our day, we have a far more extensive development of the wisdom displayed in the human fabric, and of course a much stronger argument to avoid the error of the skeptic.

But besides this, I would present to the physician of Christian feeling, the moral reflec-

tion to be drawn from the very nature of his duties, as one of the most touching arguments for the benignity of Him, of whose providence he is the agent. Nay, I would extend that argument from these lesser divine mercies, to the greater mercy which await the Christian; when disease and pain shall be no more.

In the hope, Gentlemen, that these remarks will not be accounted unprofessional, I now enter on the office you have assigned me, in the full trust that the kindness which has elevated me to this seat, will make allowance for any imperfections in the discharge of its duties. I trust also, that as we are associated not only by law, but by *kindred professional feelings*, and for the public good, our society will ever be distinguished for unity, and an harmonious co-operation of its members in the great objects for which it was formed.

That our opinions should always be co-incident, is not to be expected; but as opinions are often mistaken, and the human judgment always fallible, we ought not, in these respects, to be over tenacious; and if we are mutually candid and forbearing, the spirit of unity will not fail to be predominant.

Let us hope that nothing will occur to mar the happiness, or to check the usefulness and respectability of our Society. And let me *entreat* you, Gentlemen, to *unite* in the *great* work of *promoting order and harmony*. *Accomplish* this, and you will preserve self-respect, and *secure* the confidence of an enlightened community.

FINIS.

ALTERATIONS OF BY-LAWS.

THE FOLLOWING
ALTERATIONS OF AND ADDITIONS TO
THE
BY-LAWS OF THE SOCIETY

Were adopted July 7, 1825.

IN CHAP. IV.

The words, "preside and," to be erased.

CHAP. V. ART. III.

To be transferred to Chapter 10th.

ART. IX. IN CHAP. IX.

Article 3d to be abolished, and Article 2d to read thus :—

The Delegate shall perform the duties prescribed by the Society.

IN CHAP. XI.

Erase Ten and insert Eleven.

IN CHAP. XI.

The following inserted :

ARTICLE IV.

No member in publishing a paper which has been read before this Society, shall, without their permission, state its having been read before them.

The following to be added to the By-Laws, as

CHAPTER XII.

Of Permanent Committees.

ARTICLE I.

Four permanent, viz. The Library Committee; The Committee of Intelligence; The Meteorological Committee; and The Committee on Diseases, shall be appointed by the President at the Anniversary Meeting.

ARTICLE II.

The Library Committee shall from time to time purchase such Books as may be ordered by the Society.

ARTICLE III.

The Library Committee shall have power, with the consent of the Society, to make such Rules and Regulations as shall be thought most conclusive to the welfare of the Library.

ARTICLE IV.

The Committee of Intelligence shall collect and report to this Society, recent Medical Facts and Intelligence.

ARTICLE V.

Any Member of this Committee may report verbally such articles of intelligence as he may acquire.

ARTICLE VI.

This Committee shall keep a book in which they shall record all information given to the Society.

ARTICLE VII.

This Committee shall take charge of all Models and Instruments, (with the exception of the Meteorological Apparatus) belonging to this Society.

ARTICLE VIII.

The Meteorological Committee shall keep, or cause to be kept, a regular series of Observations, noticing the temperature and currents of air, the variations in the barometer, the quantity of rain fallen, the progress of vegetation, and all other circumstances connected with the climate, which may have an influence on our diseases; the instruments and apparatus for which they may procure at the expense of the Society.

ARTICLE IX.

It shall be the duty of the Committee on Diseases, to investigate the character, causes, and progress of Diseases as they may prevail, with the best means for their prevention and cure, and keep a record of the same.

ARTICLE X.

It shall be the duty of the Committees to report every three months, or oftener if ordered by the Society, the records of their proceedings, with such observations as they may think proper.

IN ART. II. OF CHAP. XIII.

Erase "member," and insert "Candidate for membership."

CHAP XII. ART. IV.

No member who has been absent from four successive stated meetings of this Society, during the preceding year, without satisfactory excuse, shall be eligible to any office at the next anniversary.



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